

Volume 1 | Issue 8
December, 2023

Brimfield Historical Commission

A Message From the BHC

The Historical Commission wishes everyone

MERRY CHRISTMAS!

HAPPY HANUKKAH!

MERRY KWANZAA!

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

This issue remembers how different Brimfield groups celebrated Christmas over the years AND a Christmas story by a local author.

Members

Sue DeBruin, Chairperson

Adrienne Bachand

Roseann Bergdoll

Mark Conners

Robert Corry

John Curtis

Michael DeFalco

Donating Historical Materials

If you have any historical documents or photographs pertaining to Brimfield history or her residents that you don't want or don't know what to do with, please consider donating them to the Brimfield Historical Commission. A large part of our mission is to promote and preserve Brimfield history and one

important way to manage that is by insuring that items contributing to and documenting that history are kept and made available to future generations. If you share our love of town history and are considering making a donation, please contact a Commission member to discuss the process and answer any questions you might have. If you do have historical items but don't wish to part with them, consider allowing the Historical Commission to make digital copies and then return the originals.

1899

From the December 27 issue of the Springfield Republican

There was a successful Christmas concert, followed by a supper and distribution of gifts from two Christmas trees, at the Church Monday evening. The exercises were held in the audience-room of the church, and consisted of speaking and singing by the children, singing by the choir, and solos by Mrs. Kyle and Mr. Kibbe. The supper, which was free to all, was served in the vestry, and as many as 250 sat down to the tables.

1908

From the December 25 issue of the Springfield Republican

Christmas Exercises at the Academy

Interesting Christmas exercises were held in the academy hall Wednesday afternoon. The exercises opened with a selection by the school orchestra, the members of which are Earle Doyle, LeRoy Jarrett, James Mallahy and James Kirby, violins; Gladys Munroe and Agatha Kirby, cellos; Munroe Tarbell, cornet, and Miss Veronica Kirby, piano. The school chorus then sang, "The boatman's song," after which there were remarks about the coming of the Christ child by Rev. Samuel Eaton. A vocal solo, "The Gift," by Miss Winona Shaw, followed, after which came a song by the school, "The landing of the Pilgrims," and a piano solo by Miss Veronica Kirby. The school then sang "Oh, little town of Bethlehem." After this part of the program a selection from Dicken's "Christmas Carol" was given by members of the senior middle class, Munroe Tarbell, Earle Williams, Miss Gladys Webber, Miss Agatha Kirby, Miss Gladys Munroe and Harlow George. A piano solo by Miss Veronica Kirby followed, after which the school sang "America," with orchestral accompaniment, as was given with all the choruses. Principal Kenney then made appropriate remarks, interpreting one manifestation of the spirit of Christmas as that of patriotism expressed by regarding the interests of others in town, state and nation. At the close Mr.

Kenney presented a box of dainty calendars sent to him for the pupils by Rev. Francis S. Child of Holland, which were distributed as the school passed out. The quality of the musical program, which occupied so much of the afternoon, was of a high order and showed the ability of the pupils and the superior training they are having under Mr. Kenney's instruction. There was a good attendance.

From December 20 in the Springfield Republican

1917

Soldiers' Christmas Packages

At a recent meeting of the Red Cross Auxiliary letters of thanks for Christmas packages were read by Mrs. Streeter from George K. Hitchcock, who is engaged in clerical work in the medical corps at Camp Devens, and Sergeant Roscoe Nichols, who is doing clerical work in the United States general hospital at Williams Bridge, N.Y. A report from the committee chosen to purchase the materials for 19 Christmas packages for the Brimfield soldiers was read. Two were sent to the two boys in France, Charles M. Streeter and Gilbert Favreau, through the Springfield Republican, and similar packages were mailed directly to boys serving in American camps; 19 other uniform packages, though not containing as many articles, were mailed to soldiers in France through the Red Cross general distribution, with the assurance from the Hampden County chapter that similar packages would be received by the Brimfield boys whether in this country or France. About \$80 was raised by contributions throughout the town for the Christmas gifts.

From the December 18 issue of the Springfield Union

1958

Members of American Legion Auxiliary will meet Friday at 8 in Hitchcock Academy to fill Christmas stockings for children at Monson State Hospital.

Brimfield Garden Club will meet today at 1:30 in Hitchcock Academy Center to make Christmas greens for shutins.

Charles M. Streeter Legion post 263 will give a Christmas party for children Friday at 1 in the Town Hall.

From the December 10 issue of the Springfield Union

1962

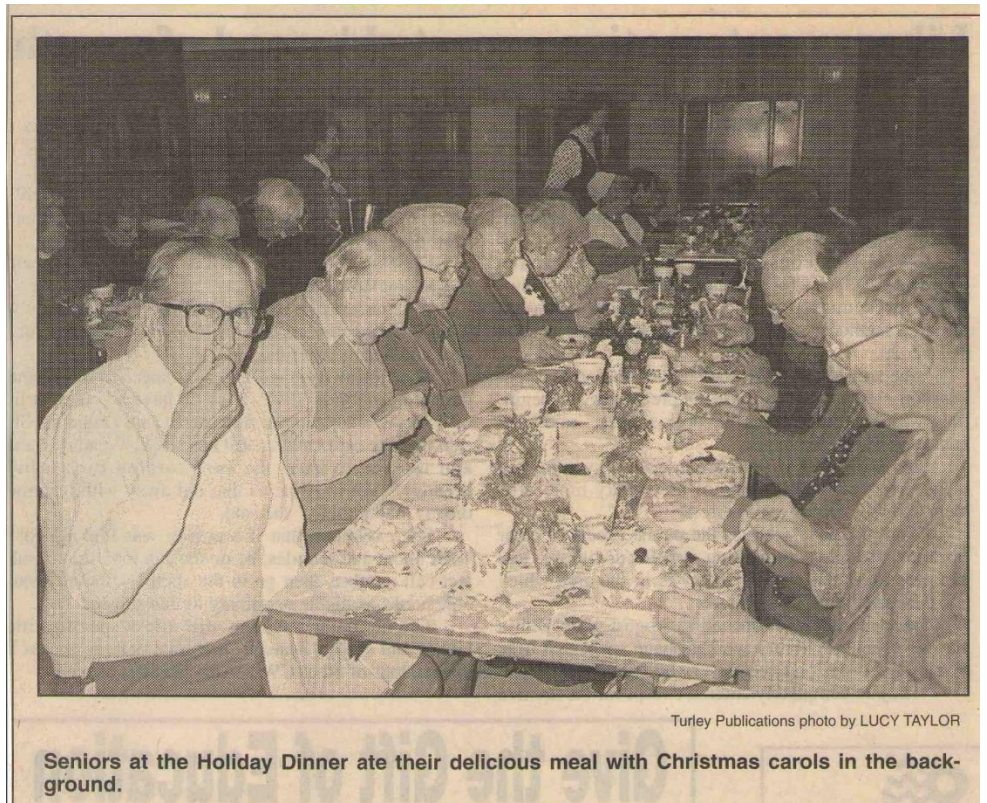
The Christmas party of the Ladies Benevolent Society will be Thursday night at 8 in the church. Mrs. Ralph Hall will talk on "Not what you get but what you give."

A covered dish luncheon at 12:30 Friday at Hitchcock Academy Center will precede the Senior Citizens Christmas party.

Wives will be guests at the St. Christopher Council, Knights of Columbus, Christmas party Friday at 7:30 p.m. at Maple Lake Arms. A smorgasbord will precede the dancing.

From the December 18 issue of The Journal Register

1997



A good time was had by all at the Holiday Meal put on by the Brimfield Council on Aging last Thursday at Brimfield Elementary School.

It's the third year it was held, out of concern for many seniors who were unable to join members of their families at Thanksgiving and Christmas.

Many seniors signed up for the full course turkey-dinner, 32 in all. It was prepared by chairman Mary Lou Murray, Caroline Porter, Dawn Lesiege, Marie and Hal McNamee, Donna and Gus Papas and Debbie Tierney.

But the get-together was not just to go have a meal, it was also a time of fellowship with their friends in a holiday setting, with Christmas music in the background.

According to those approached, the food was “excellent” and served very efficiently by principal Gail Brier and teachers Gail Gilman and Constance Thompson, along with sixth graders Meg Connors, Emily Wilson and Ben Wood.

There was competition among the students for the privilege of waiting on the seniors. Around 13 volunteers for the job, and since only three were needed, names were drawn, with Meg, Emily and Ben the winners.

The four attractive centerpieces were given to the ones with a lucky ticket, namely Mid Reynolds, Dorothy O’Hare, Martha Hancock and Gerry Portier. Each diner went home with a Christmas party favor.

Food was supplied by stores in the area and with expense money in the Council on Aging budget.

2000

From the December 28 issue of The Journal Register



Turley Publications photo by LUCY TAYLOR

Sandra Osborne and Santa Claus greet children at a Christmas party held at St. Christopher's Catholic Church in Brimfield Dec. 18. The party included pizza, candy, gifts and a chance to meet Santa.

St. Christopher's Children's Choir has a Party

Many treats awaited the Children's Choir of St. Christopher's Catholic Church Dec. 18, including pizza, candy, gifts, and an opportunity to meet Santa Claus. They had been rehearsing for their Christmas Eve Concert.

Once Sandra Osborne, their choir director, said “Here comes Santa,” the children finished their pizza and lined up to tell him what they wanted for Christmas, and received a gift of a singing angel.

Then they had a raffle with balloon instruments as prizes, including a guitar, keyboard, trumpet and tuba.

On the blackboard, the children were asked to fill out “a big wish list on what you want for Christmas.” To top the list was Osborne’s, “I wish I could take all of you to Maryland” (where she is moving Jan. 29).

Other wishes included for Mrs. Osborne to stay in Brimfield; a scooter; a finger dirt bike; a laptop computer; a reindeer; a Pokemon Gold; a new puppy; and a reindeer and “my two front teeth.”

“Thanks to the moms and dads for your support,” said Osborne. She also expressed thanks for the mothers who helped put on the party for the children and the children who helped.

2023



The Brimfield Gazebo

A Christmas Story

The following story was found in the John W. Brown home on Warren Road. It was written by Alice Ormes Allen in 1916 when she was 43. She was the daughter of James M. Ormes and Mary Wood Hubbard and the granddaughter of Newton S. Hubbard and Sarah Puffer who lived in the Hubbard Homestead on Tower Hill Road. Alice was a poet of some note and wrote short stories for a number of child-related magazines and journals, including *The School Journal*, *Teachers Magazine* and *American Motherhood*. In 1904, for the dedication of the new Brimfield Library, Mrs. Allen read a poem which she had written especially for the occasion.

“The Little Girl who HATED to Sew”

A Christmas Story
By Alice Ormes Allen
Tower Hill Road
1916

Did you ever hear about the little girl who HATED to sew? But she had to. She had to sew one yard of stitches on something every day. And mend all her own stockings. Her mother said she was big enough to and that it would help her to grow up into a Lady.

Emma Lou said she didn't want to grow up into a Lady and she would rather wear holes than sew them up. She hated to sew a yard of stitches and she hated still more to sew up holes in stockings. She wished she were a Boy instead of a little girl eight years old.

Her mother said “Why, Emma Lou: Go and get your thimble and your mending bag and mend that hole in the toe of your stocking before supper.”

Emma Lou knew she wouldn't get any supper till she had mended the hole as her mother told her. And there was going to be chocolate cake for supper – with nuts on it. So very slowly, Emma Lou went for the mending bag and thimble, and very slowly she sat down to mend that horrid hole. It was as big as a half a dollar. “Oh, dear:”, said Emma Lou to herself, I wish I had emptied the sand out of my shoe when I played in the sand pile, then this hole wouldn't be so big.”

Emma Lou looked at the hole, and looked at it. But it didn't get any smaller. Just then the clock struck six. “Oh,” said Emma Lou. “I must hurry or I shall be late to supper.” And all of a sudden she took a little needle and pulled the thread. There wasn't a hole any more. But the stocking was all puckered up instead of being nicely darned. Then Emma Lou put the stocking way down in

the bottom of the bag, out of sight, and ran to brush her hair and wash her face and hands.

And that was three days before Christmas.

Christmas Eve Emma Lou had to go to bed early. Her mother said Santa Claus wouldn't Come when little boys or girls were around. After she had gone to bed her mother said "Emma Lou forgot to hang up her stockings and I shall have to go way upstairs and get a pair." But just then she saw the mending bag on the little sewing table. So she looked in there to see if there were any stockings, and sure enough, there was just one pair way down in the bottom of the bag. So her mother hung them up by the fireplace, And she was tired and never noticed that the hole in the toe was all puckered up, and wasn't darned at all. It was a great big hole, as big as half a dollar.

That night when Santa Claus filled the stockings he put a little round package way down in the toe of one of Emma Lou's stockings. It was the first stocking he came to, and it was the one with the puckered up hole. But he was in a hurry and he didn't notice it at all.

He chuckled as he put it in and said to himself, "Now I guess Emma Lou will get up in the morning in time for breakfast." Then he tucked in an orange, and a bag of candy, and a pencil box and a half ribbon, and a little book, and last of all, a dear little cup and saucer, each wrapped in tissue paper as the first little package had been.

A big pink and white doll all dressed in pink and white filled the other stocking.

Emma Lou waked up so early the next morning that it was as dark as a pocket. But she lighted her little lamp and looked at the big clock in the stairway and it was half past five. So she put on her slippers and pattered down to the sitting room where it was all warm and comfy by the fireplace.

And there hung one nice fat stocking with a beautiful pink and white doll smiling out of it, and one poor limp stocking with nothing in it. For the thread had broken that puckered up the hole and the heavy things in the stocking had pulled the hole out bigger still, and everything had fallen on the bricks in front of the fireplace. What A sorry Little Emma Lou it was who picked up a broken cup and saucer and a darling little clock with the glass all cracked across the front.

That was five years ago and do you know – Emma Lou has darned all the holes in her stockings ever since. "For you can never tell", she says, "what you might want to use a stocking for."